

IN THE CLAIMS:

A complete listing of the claims is set forth below. Please amend the claims as follows:

1. **(Currently Amended)** A method for optimizing prices at which products are sold in an automated marketplace, comprising:

generating a matrix of all possible buyers and sellers for a product;

for each buyer, providing a buyer's reserve price corresponding to a maximum purchase price for each possible seller;

for each seller, providing a seller's reserve price corresponding to a minimum sales price for each possible buyer;

calculating a utility value for each pairing of buyers and ~~sellers~~; sellers, wherein the utility value is a linear utility value corresponding to the difference between each buyer's reserve price and each seller's reserve price;

selecting a unique pairing of buyers and sellers that maximizes total utility;

calculating a buyer optimal allocation of the total utility for all buyers and sellers in a stable manner;

calculating a seller optimal allocation of the total utility for all buyers and sellers in a stable manner; and

for each pair in the unique pairing, selecting a transaction price that allocates the utility between that seller and that buyer.

2. **(Previously Presented)** The method of claim 1, wherein providing the buyer's reserve price for each buyer comprises:

for each buyer, providing the buyer's reserve price corresponding to a maximum purchase price for each possible seller, wherein at least one buyer limits the sellers to which the buyer agrees to be matched to a subset less than all possible sellers.

3. **(Previously Presented)** The method of claim 2, wherein each buyer sets the buyer's reserve price for each possible seller with whom that buyer agrees to be matched, and wherein the buyer's reserve price can be different for each such seller.

4. **(Previously Presented)** The method of claim 1, wherein providing the seller's reserve price for each seller comprises:

for each seller, providing the seller's reserve price corresponding to a minimum sales price for each possible buyer, wherein at least one seller limits the buyers to which the seller agrees to be matched to a subset less than all possible buyers.

5. **(Previously Presented)** The method of claim 4, wherein each seller sets a particular seller's reserve price for each possible buyer with whom that seller agrees to be matched, and wherein the particular seller's reserve price can be different for each such buyer.

6. **(Previously Presented)** The method of claim 1, wherein the utility value calculated for each pairing of a buyer and a seller is a difference between the buyer's reserve price and the seller's reserve price.

7. **(Previously Presented)** The method of claim 1, wherein the step of selecting a transaction price comprises:

providing a proportion value between 0 and 1; and

selecting a transaction price which is proportional to a difference between the optimized seller utility and the optimized buyer utility equal to the proportion value.

8. **(Original)** The method of claim 7, wherein the proportion value equals 0.5.

9. **(Original)** The method of claim 7, wherein the proportion value is less than 0.5.

10. **(Original)** The method of claim 7, wherein the proportion value is greater than 0.5.

11. **(Previously Presented)** The method of claim 1, further comprising:
conducting product transactions at the selected transaction prices.

12. **(Original)** The method of claim 1, wherein the buyers and sellers provide their respective reserve prices by communicating them to a central marketplace server.

13. **(Previously Presented)** A system for matching buyers and sellers in an automated marketplace, comprising:

a plurality of buyers for a product;

a plurality of sellers for the product;

a central system containing a matrix of all possible buyers and sellers for the product;

means for each buyer to select a buyer's reserve price representing a maximum purchase price, wherein the buyer's reserve price is selected for each possible seller of the product;

means for each seller to select a seller's reserve price representing a minimum selling price, wherein the seller's reserve price is selected for each possible buyer of the product;

an optimizer within the central system for assigning a utility value to pairings between buyers and sellers, and calculating a set of such pairings to optimize a global utility value; and

means within the central system for assigning buyers and sellers according to the calculated optimized set of pairings, and assigning a stable transaction price for each pairing between the buyer's and seller's reserves for that pairing.

14. **(Previously Presented)** The system of claim 13, wherein each buyer set's a different buyer's reserve price for each possible seller.

15. **(Previously Presented)** The system of claim 13, wherein each seller set's a different seller's reserve price for each buyer.

16. **(Original)** The system of claim 13, wherein the assigned utility value for each pairing is equal to a difference in the buyer's reserve and the seller's reserve for that pairing.